



# Buzzwords ...



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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

## In this issue ...

- \* **Special market issue**
- \* **Crop report**
- \* **More on truck regs**
- \* **Winter bees**

**Buzzwords No 17 March 1990**



## PLANNING FOR THE INDUSTRY

The NBA executive are spending four days shortly to plan major activities for the next year. They're gathering at Flock House from 12 - 15 March.

Apart from the regular business of executive, particular attention is to be given to the setting up of the structure for the Apiary Registration and Inspection Fee. It is planned that this will be included as a regulation under the new Commodities Levy Bill soon to be introduced to parliament.

Decisions must be made on the best way to introduce and administer such a fee, and it is likely that a major reorganisation of the NBA's financial system may result.

The hive levy may be removed in favour of an apiary fee to cover both the administration of the association, and the funding support required for the hive inspection and emergency response systems for our industry.

During the planning meeting, discussions will be held with MAF advisers and researchers on forming a co-ordinated system for the future benefit and security of the beekeeping industry in New Zealand.

If any of you have comments or suggestions to make, please contact the executive secretary or an executive member before 12 March.

*NBA executive*

## LATEST MARKET INFORMATION

World prices for light honey are rising. Independent reports from Japan and Europe indicate that 0 - 10 mm honey from Argentina is being quoted at \$US1,100 or more c & f Europe. This is substantially up from \$US850 - 900 last year.

Our advise to honey producers is:

- \* Don't rush to sell unless you're forced to
- \* Be careful as always
- \* The export market should produce a steady, through gradual, price rise.

*NBA executive*



## BRANCH DIARY

**Northland** branch are having a field day on Saturday 17 March at Malcolm Haines property. It starts at 10.30 am and there'll be a lot to keep you occupied - like how to grow your own sugar cane (save on those feeding bills), simple electronics in the honey house, buy-sell-exchange. BYO meat for a barbecue lunch. Mark the date in your diary now!

**Bay of Plenty**'s autumn field day this year will be a cracker! There's plenty for beekeepers who want to learn, kids who want to play, non-beekeepers who want to socialise and beekeepers who just want to have fun.

Mark your diary now.

**Date:** Saturday 31 March, starting at 10 am.  
**Venue:** Karl Christopherson's property at Walford Road, Aongatete.  
**Directions:** From Katikati (north), head south towards Tauranga past Morton Estate winery. Note its position carefully - you'll be back there soon! About 2 km past Morton Estate turn right up Work Road (at the seven crosses). Walford Road is first on the right.

From Tauranga head north towards Katikati. About 25 km (more or less) you'll see Work Road on the left. Go up that and Walford road is on the right.

The venue will be signposted clearly from State Highway 2.

What's on? The field day theme is nutrition - BYO lunch, barbecued sausages are provided for an evening meal but you might like to bring a salad and some liquid refreshments. There's a wine tasting organised at the nearby award-winning Morton Estate.

Now the serious side of the day is about nutrition for bees. What's the latest on pollen substitutes? What should you feed to cell raisers to get better queens? Come and see the best gizmos for feeding syrup.

Other activities will include entertainment for kids, a barbecue tea and swim at nearby hot pools and generally mixing with other beekeepers.

Who's welcome? A warm welcome is extended to all beekeepers, and especially other branches. Those wanting to be billeted with local beekeepers should contact Karl Christopherson on (075) 20 696. Local beekeepers with spare room in their comb barns (no, just kidding) should also contact Karl.

The day goes on wet or fine, and there might be a nominal admission charge.

## HONEY CROP REPORT

Comments from the conference call of the Honey Packers Association, held on 12 February.

Overall the country crop has been very patchy with some producers having a bumper crop and some having a poor crop. The central South Island is the star performer with averages of 4-5 tonnes/100, while Southland appears to have the worst crop with averages of 1.5-2 tonnes/100.

The crop estimate at present is still only that - an estimate. Much honey has been produced in the last three weeks and there are still some areas producing. Crop estimates at this time of the year are likely to include honey yet to be produced and honey still on hives not extracted, so must be subject to caution. However with that in mind the overall crop for the country would appear to be average to slightly above average.

On top of this picture, last year's poor domestic crop generated low end-of-year stocks, resulting in good buying interest continuing into the new season. Combined with a strengthening world market the prospects are good for prices to remain firm and even increase slightly. There certainly will not be a panic to sell on a falling market such as there was three years ago.

For those with a good season under their belt and honey surplus to their needs, now would be a good time to sell sufficient for this year and put the rest aside for insurance against next year's crop. This would also seem financially to be a prudent move in view of the firm market situation.

With the later season this year the crop may not be such a high proportion of clover-type grades. If there has been a good production of other honey types late in the season, such as nodding thistle or vipers bugloss, now would be a time to think about some extra effort to separate this as a

Australia is hopeful of a good recovery of world prices for honey in the coming months, and have increased their minimum export prices to:

Grade	\$US fob	equivalent \$US c & f Europe
W	830	930
ELA	820	920
LA	820	920
PA	840	940
MA	850	950
A	840	940
DA	770	870

#### Cuba:

Cuban average production is about 9,000 tonnes, which is an average yield of 60-65 kg hive. The main crop is November/December.

#### Argentina:

The Argentine crop starts November/December. The 1989 crop was about 30,000 tonnes. Prices were down in USA, Europe and Japan. Exports to Japan were down, prices were about \$US830/tonne c & f.

For the 1989-90 crop they expect much better prices, as exporters hold no stock from the 1989 season and beekeepers little.

#### Hungary:

The 1989 crop was not very good - about 12,000 tonnes of which 4,000 tonnes was acacia and the remainder ELA/LA polyflora. They are now sold out and we will not be in the market until June 1990.

#### Canada:

Honey production season for 1989 was about 20,500 tonnes, compared with 36,000 tonnes for 1988. There is very little carryover from 1988 crop. White and extra white honey is in short supply and many beekeepers are holding for higher prices.

Price levels ranged from \$US850-1,000/tonne c & f Europe. The Canadians foresee a much firmer price for shipments in 1990. There will be approximately 5,000 tons for export in 1990, but they may end up a net importer of honey.

#### USA:

The US Honey Board has carried out a national promotion campaign and consumption is increasing. 1989 production was around 72,000 tonnes. This was a very poor crop compared with other years where 90,000 tonnes is normal. Orange blossom was down to 20% of normal. There is a demand in the USA for darker honeys for industrial use.

The US National Honey Board has now been promoting for two years. Analysis of bar code sales show that sales are up 16%. Table usage is down as housewives prepare fewer meals in preference to fast foods. The area for expansion is

therefore industrial and fast foods.

Their domestic demand is currently about 100,000 tonnes per year, and with a crop of 72,000 tonnes have a 28,000 tonne shortfall. USA will therefore be importing significant quantities, especially as they expand demand. Additionally we can expand demand.

Some in the US say that ultimately the price support scheme will disappear.

#### Uruguay:

The crop used to be 5,000 tonnes, but they expect about 3,000 tonnes production from the 1989-90 crop. Prices are aligned with Argentina.

#### Mexico:

Annual production is now 38,000 tonnes of which 35,000 tonnes is exported. Mexico used to produce 63,000 tonnes. This reduction is due to weather, bad management, the African bee and inflation which is currently 150%.



Mexican beekeepers have had the same peso price for honey for three years, despite the over-valued currency. Beekeepers are retiring and going into other businesses. The African bee is now half way up to the USA border and there is some toll on production. Yield per hive is decreasing. Beekeepers are not investing in equipment and they are therefore not improving their production.

To protect against the African bee there is legislation preventing the movement of hives from the coast to the highlands. The highlands produce about 7,000 tonnes and this will reduce. The Yucatan province provides about 15,000 tonnes. The rest is ELA/LA from the coastal areas.

The Yucatan is now a free market. The co-ops have lost their power. There is a strong demand for Yucatan honey. The number of major exporters in Mexico has reduced from seven to four.

There is no carryover stock in Mexico. The new crop in Yucatan starts in January, then in April the central Mexico crop. The freight rate to Europe is \$US40-50/tonne.

AMEMPA (the association of Mexican exporters) accounts for about 16,000 tonnes or 40% of the crop. German buyers are establishing their own buying companies in Mexico and the volume handled by AMEMPA members is reducing.

*Condensed from IHEO reports by MAF.*

purer line so that it is more saleable as a unifloral honey rather than a multifloral honey.

Overall prospects for the producer are looking good for the coming season.

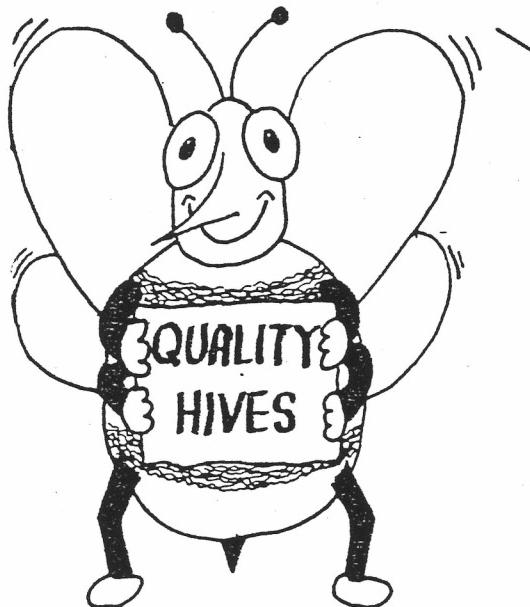
*Information supplied by Peter Bray.*

## QUEEN QUALITY COMPETITION

There is still time to enter if you act now, as resting of queens continues until 30 April. Sharpen up your skills and show the world how good your queens are, or learn how to improve them. Only two queens are required.

To enter send \$5 to R Clarke, 81 Lakings Road, Blenheim. In exchange you'll get the entry forms and details of the procedure. Later you'll send two queens and the testing charges of \$56.25 directly to MAF at Lynfield.

As we've all been saying lately - go for gold!



## BEES TO THE USA - THE LATEST

Well, the latest to 21 February anyway. Avid readers of this saga will remember that in the last issue of *Buzzwords* we described the bureaucratic labyrinth this approval was going through.

The proposed approval for kiwi bees to go stateside is moving along. It has cleared the OMB and has been published in the Federal Register. This notification had a 15-day period for comments instead of the usual 30 days.

The period expired on 21 February, the day *Buzzwords* went to press, so we are waiting to hear if there are any serious objections. If not, the final approval should be promulgated very soon.

## WORLD HONEY MARKET

Honey exporters say there's now a undersupply on the world market of 15,500 tonnes (that's more than New Zealand's entire production).

IHEO - the International Honey Exporters' Organisation, says that the market has changed significantly from a state of oversupply to one of shortage.

Their benchmark prices are:

	\$US/tonne c & f Europe
White	990
ELA	970
LA	950

### Exports:

1989	214,500 tonnes
1988	249,000 tonnes

Major exporting countries: China, Mexico, Argentina, USSR, Argentina.

### Imports:

1989	230,000 tonnes
1988	207,000 tonnes

Major importers: W Germany, Japan, USA, UK.

Details for some countries follow.

### Australia:

The honey situation in Australia at present is typical of how quickly the whole scene can change in a short period of time. The production season is mainly October-April each year with very light production during winter months.

At the end of last season the market was well stocked after a good production run. The world market had been very difficult and returns from bulk export sales were below what beekeepers expected.

There was a stockpile of honey which was largely in producers' hands. The packers or middlemen didn't want to buy it because they were overstocked anyway.

In six months the situation has reversed completely. Normal domestic demand and residue export sales have taken up all this surplus stock. Export contracts are in place for a normal production season but production is about four weeks late in starting and current indications are that it will be a poor crop.

Honey packers are now short of stock to fill normal requirements and are scouring the countryside looking for it. Beekeepers are being offered slightly better prices but the bottom line remains the poor return from bulk exports.

The bulk buyers in Europe have been able to pick and choose for some time now. In Australia's case the situation has now changed and buyers who stalled their buying orders for one reason or another are now missing out, as the country will not have the expected stocks available in the coming months. Buyers are suddenly prepared to pay higher prices to cover their positions.

## IT'S EXPORT SEASON AGAIN

Fresh, new season's honey will soon be leaving New Zealand for ports all around the world. If any of your honey is going to be exported this year, there's a few things you should know.

Any honey certified by MAF must be prepared for export in premises that are registered under the Food Hygiene Regulations, and comply with them. That includes your extracting and packing facilities.

If you're sending honey through an agent, that exporter may ask you to provide details of your current registration.

*MAF Tauranga*

## TRANSPORT LAW REFORM

Information sheets produced recently by the Ministry of Transport explain changes to the transport law, and are available at MOT offices throughout the country. The ten headings are as follows:

1. Special notice for farmers (and beekeepers)
2. Driving hours log books
3. Driving hours
4. Goods Service vehicle: display of name
5. Transport of hazardous substances
6. Certificate of Transport knowledge
7. Applying for a Goods Service licence
8. Certificates of Fitness
9. General information
10. Services that need to be licensed

## WAX MOTH CONTROL

Certan, a biological control agent for wax moth which had been used in the USA, is being withdrawn. The manufacturers, Zoecon, have decided that going through the expensive process of getting it re-registered is not worthwhile.

This chemical has not ever been used widely in New Zealand. I did some trials a few years ago and found that it kills greater wax moth very effectively, but leaves the combs open to destruction by lesser wax moth.

*MAF Tauranga*

## NEWS FROM THE EC

The European community is functioning more and more like one country with 12 states (for trade at least). It's also a very important honey buyer.

The 12 countries of the EC produced (in 1987-latest figures available) 80,000 tonnes of honey, which is only 40% of their consumption of 200,000 tonnes. Production is 90 kg per beekeeper, at an average of 11.4 kg per hive.

There is quite a range among member countries. Self sufficiency in honey is 108% in Greece, but only 5.4% in the

UK. These countries also have the extreme figures for average hive holdings per beekeeper, 5.2 in the UK but 55.3 in Greece. (The figure for New Zealand is 49.3).

Consumption of honey in the EC is increasing by 1-2% per year. Average consumption per head is 600 g per year, ranging from 300 g in the UK to 1800 g in Greece.

The average import price of honey was 0.876 ECU/kg in 1987 (\$NZ1.83 at today's exchange rate), down from 1.071 ECU/kg in 1983 (\$NZ2.23 on the same basis).

*MAF Tauranga*

## RAROTONGA CONFERENCE

Don't forget - if you'd like to go, contact Glen Beattie at Thomas Cook : phone (067) 75 459 or P O Box 545 New Plymouth.

## TRUCK LOGBOOKS

When do you need to carry a truck logbook? What are the "new" rules?

Beekeepers are classified as farmers and don't have to keep a logbook for trips within a 50 km radius of home base. For further (one-off) exemptions contact your local MOT office or the 24 hour hotline at (04) 859 869.

Beekeepers must still comply with the laws on driving and duty hours, even for the periods not covered by a logbook.

Other new laws do still apply, such as certificate of fitness, goods service licence, examination of transport knowledge.

NBA executive are still working with Federated Farmers to monitor the law changes and try and have some requirements done away with.

## EXPORT AWARD TO SOUTHLAND

More export innovations from the Deep South. Murray Ballantyne of Woodlands Apiaries has picked up a Trade Development Board award for his company's work in pioneering the export of high-moisture honey to Japan.

A number of Southland and Otago beekeepers have been supplying honey to Murray as part of this project. Woodlands Apiaries have also been involved with cut-comb exports.

Now Murray has another idea to tempt the Japanese - cooked brood. They love piquant nibbles to go with their drinks, and apparently brood cooked in butter and dipped in soy sauce, honey and sake is - well just the bee's knees.

When the local MP turned up to present Murray with his award he was given a sample of what the newspaper report called "bee babies". The accompanying photo shows him looking as impressed as if he'd just heard that his electoral majority had been halved.

## WINTER BEES

A subject we all need to think about more is having 'fat' bees going into winter. A recent article by Karl Kunert and Karl Crailsheim in the *Journal of Apicultural Research* documents the weights and chemical makeup of spring to autumn workers raised from sister queens. Other sister workers were labelled, placed in observation hive colonies, and observed for longevity.

As might be expected, summer bees that were pushing to rear maximum brood and collect food to feed the new bees had the shortest life span. Bees persisting through the winter had the longest life span, probably because they didn't have to raise babies or feed teenagers.

Which newly-emerged bees weighed the most? Bees reared either when nectar and pollen supplies were most abundant, or when the bees were going to be "winter" bees, were heaviest. Chemical analysis showed variations in protein, carbohydrate, and fat content throughout the season, but bees going into winter were the highest in all three categories.

These findings suggest that even under the conditions of diminishing availability of pollen and nectar, late-summer nurse bees are stimulated to rear the biggest, best-nourished bees possible to go through the winter. The question for beekeepers is "do my hives contain enough mixed pollens and syrup to allow my bees to raise 'fat' offspring to survive the winter?"



In many cases, the answer is no. Adverse factors such as drought, foraging confined to commercial monoculture, and reduced foraging populations caused by the rigours of commercial crop pollination, all combine to reduce the ability of colonies to produce fat bees.

The findings of the above study and others have shown that moderately to well-fed larvae can produce pretty good workers, but that poorly-fed larvae develop into 'skinny' bees that have a very much-reduced life span. Superimpose nosema on this scenario and serious winter losses are predictable.

If you can afford it, now is the time to provide your bees with sugar syrup and pollen supplement or substitutes. Most beekeepers know that a shot of syrup now will stimulate some brood rearing. Without the extra protein, however, these new bees will not be healthy.

Various environmental stresses are rougher on "skinny" bees and they do not resist diseases as well as they should. Money

invested now in protein supplement and sugar should return many times its value in pollination fees and honey production next year. Letting bees dwindle away will cost a lot more in the long run.

Protein nutrition showed its importance in pollination hives in the Bay of Plenty this year. Feeding supplements was beneficial in getting hives to strength and, just as importantly, ensuring that bees will live for long enough once hives go onto a honey flow.

This is an important subject which will be discussed in future items. (The above article was based on one in the UC Apiaries newsletter).

*MAF apiculture unit, Tauranga*

## EUROPE - HEAVEN OR HELL

With Europe approaching the single market of 1992 many are asking if this brave new world is going to be heaven or hell.

One wag defined a European heaven as one where the cooking is French, the policing British, the sex Italian and the organisation German. A European hell? One where the cooking is British, the policing French, the sex Germanic and organisation is by the Italians.

## BRITISH BEEKEEPERS BENEFIT

One spinoff from the European Community food surplus is a scheme which pays farmers not to farm.

We've all heard about similar ideas before, but this one is designed to reduce the area of land being cultivated for crops. In the UK alone, over 1,800 farmers joined this year and will lock up 58,000 ha in 1989.

Who benefits? Beekeepers get a lot more diverse nectar and pollen sources as wild flowers again occupy fallow lands. All lovers of nature benefit too, as the ecological diversity of the countryside is increased.

### BUZZWORDS IS ...

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